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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the University of Wisconsin administrative internship program of 1970-71 in which each of 13 interns served as an assistant to and an understudy of an experienced administrator. Responses to a program evaluation instrument are summarized. These include the interns' statements of their objectives and the administrators' and sponsors' perceptions of the interns' objectives. To get a measure of empathy between the intern, his sponsor, and his administrator, the sponsors and supervising administrators were asked to react to the evaluation instrument in terms of how they perceived the reactions of the interns. (Author/MLF)

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THE ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP: THE MARRIAGE OF THEORY AND PRACTICE *

Robert P. Moser

The pursuit of excellence and survival in a rapidly changing society demands more than ever before that practitioners and theoreticians find means of collaboration. Whether we like it or not, the facts indicate that school administrators and professors have behaved as though they were operating in different worlds. There just didn't seem to be any point of tangency where the "academic" and the "practical" worlds could meet. If either world is to survive, there must be a teaming of talents in the universities and the talents of the practitioners in the school systems. The "train'em" and "forget'em" concept of preparing educational administrators must give way to the "teaming of talents" approach. Relevance for practitioners and professors presumes that the preparation of both must be a continuing effort. The patriarchal, father-son relationship between the professor and the practitioner must give way to a peer relationship in which professionals with different specializations collaborate in the educational problem solving process.

The Internship Concept

The administrative internship is one vehicle of practitioner-theoretician collaboration. The University of Wisconsin, Department of Educational Administration has been involved with the internship notion since 1963, first as a participating institution in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Internship Project. Since 1969, the university developed and administered its own program. The program at the University of Wisconsin has been expanded to include internships in higher education, vocational technical institutes, intermediate districts, elementary and secondary schools, central offices, educational associations, and social agencies.

The internship concept is based upon the theory of learning by doing under competent and realistic guidance. An administrative intern serves a full school year in an administrative post under the tutelage of an experienced practitioner and a university sponsor. Built into the concept is university-institution collaboration--the marriage of theory and practice. An essential characteristic of the internship year is frequent interaction between the intern, the supervising administrator, and the university sponsor. As the intern fulfills the responsibilities of his assignment, he has numerous opportunities to try out his theoretical notions under the watchful eye of his supervising administrator; at the same time, the supervising administrator can benefit from the skills and the insights of the intern. In the process the university sponsor serves as a catalyst and consultant.

The intern is responsible for engaging in some in-depth study of concern to the institution; for example, in-depth studies have been made by interns on such diverse concerns as initiating new attendance procedures, evaluating curricular changes, developing new curricula, conducting population studies prior to redistricting, developing school facilities planning processes, codifying policies, and staff appraisal procedures. The interns are expected to make a worthwhile contribution to the improvement of the enterprise in which they

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are working.

The intern maintains a daily log of his activities and appraises regularly his performance on the job; he writes evaluation reports on his experiences; and he attends a series of one day seminars held in different intern locations in addition to his regular duties.

Administrative Internship Assignments 1970-71

The thirteen interns in 1970-71 received a variety of assignments. Six interns worked on the secondary school level: George Bartelt, Russell Draeger, Tom Joynt, Larry Lark, Barbara Powers, and Richard Schafer served as intern assistant principals at Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School, Kenosha Tremper High School, Pulaski High School, Madison East High School, Rockford, Illinois West High School, and Madison Memorial High School, respectively. Four interns worked in central offices: Alvin Aho and John Berg interned in the finance and research division of Milwaukee Public Schools, David Rock was an intern assistant superintendent in McFarland, and Clifford Stanford was system wide vocational educational coordinator in Eau Claire. Two interns served on the elementary school level: Jiles Cole interned as an assistant middle school principal in Platteville and Peter Leonard was intern principal of the K-9 Birnamwood School in the Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District. Henry Kaynes was the only intern in higher education; he interned as assistant to the Executive Vice President of Stout State University

Interns for the 1971-72 school year have been placed in the public schools of Appleton, Eau Claire, Germantown, Hartland, Kimberly, Palmyra, Pulaski, and Wisconsin Rapids; in the Cooperative Educational Service Agency #11 in Portage, in the Fond du Lac Vocational Technical Institute, in the Office of Academic Affairs, Wisconsin State Universities, and in the office of Student Housing at the University of Wisconsin.

An Objective Oriented Program

Built into the internship program concept are basic objectives involving practicial experiences for the intern in carrying out routine administrative tasks and significant projects with long range implications; stimulation of both the intern and supervising administrator to expand and improve his competencies in conducting research and utilizing findings; flexibility to permit program modification when experience indicates a need for change; reduction of the artificial communication barriers between professors and practitioners; narrowing the chasm between theory and practice to the end that preservice field work and classroom activity will be viewed widely as complementary activities; encouragement of the intern to experiment in the utilization and development of his own personal, technical, interpersonal, and managerial competencies.

Interns are encouraged to set some precise objectives prior to the internship year. Representative of the objectives enunciated by the 1970-71 interns were these:

- -to improve my skills in interpersonal relations
- -to learn curriculum development leadership skills
- -to improve my general knowledge of educational administration

-to learn more about the realities of educational politics
-to learn to apply theory to practice
-to develop a solid personal philosophy of education
-to utilize my experiences in self improvement
-to develop a more cosmopolitan approach to my own study of educational administration.

The activity log, kept by the intern, is a tool utilized to appraise regularly the intern's progress toward goals. Regular visits by the university sponsor are focused upon "How are we doing?" considerations. The monthly seminars are designed to give emphasis to various relevant aspects of educational administration, and to foster intern-administrator interaction. Each intern writes an evaluation report each semester for the sponsor and the program coordinator. At the end of the year the interns, the supervising administrators and the university sponsor engage in a formal evaluation procedures. The data in the remainder of this report represent an analysis of output from the appraisal procedure.

The Interns Appraise Their Experiences

Interns, administrators, and sponsors responded to an evaluation instrument, the "Administrative Internship Evaluation" form, composed of three parts as part of the end-of-year evaluation procedures. Part I solicited from the interns a statement of their objectives as interns, and the administrators' and sponsors' perceptions of the interns' objectives. Part II requested personal evaluations by the interns on intern activities, the seminars, and intern competencies needing further development. Administrators and sponsors were asked to respond in terms of how they perceived that the interns had responded. Part III included five open-ended evaluative questions on recommendations for improvement of the total program.

The three respondent groups were asked to score each of ten intern program elements on a three point scale of high (3) to average (2) to low (1). The mean response scores of each of the three groups on each of the ten program elements appraised are shown on Table I.

The interns evaluated all but one of the ten program elements of greater-than-average value to them. They placed very high value on relationship with the staff, the general assignment and appropriateness of the assignment, relationship with the supervising administrator, and attendance at the seminars. The interns conceived of the keeping of the log as being of doubtful value. The overall mean score of the thirteen interns on the 10 program elements was 2.51, an indication of positive appraisal. Administrators and sponsors perceived high ratings by the interns, evidenced by overall mean scores on the ten elements of 2.46 and 2.41, respectively. The high level of congruence between intern ratings and administrator and sponsor perceptions of the intern ratings is a strong indication of good communication and empathy between the three role incumbents. One of the basic aims of the program is to establish good communication and understanding through the frequent interaction of the three role incumbents in the interaction triangle.

TABLE I

MEAN SCORES OF INTERN, SUPERVISING ADMINISTRATOR, AND UNIVERSITY SPONSOR RESPONSES APPRAISING THE VALUE TO THE INTERN OF TEN PROGRAM ELEMENTS

	Interns (n-13)		Supervising Administrators (n-12)		University Sponsors (n-12)		
	Mean Response Score	Rank Order	Mean Response Score	Rank Order	Mean Response Score	Rank Order	Composite Rank Order
1. Relationship with your supervising administrator.	2.84	4	2.83	2.5	2.50	5	4
2. Keeping the internship log.	1.60	10	2.0	10	1.50	10	10
3. Relationships with the staff in your intern location.	3.0	1.5	2.83	2.5	2.41	6.5	3
4. Relationship with your university sponsor.	2.60	6	2.81	4	2.83	3	5
5. Attendance at intern seminars.	2.83	5	2.33	7	2.75	4	6
6. General intern assignment.	3.0	1.5	2.91	1	2.91	2	1
7. Your orientation period in your assignment.	2.20	8.5	2.09	9	2.25	8	8.5
8. Writing the evaluation reports.	2.20	8.5	2.17	8	1.75	9	8.5
9. Relevance of preparation program prior to your internship.	2.50	7	2.41	6	2.41	6.5	7
10. Appropriateness of your internship position.	2.90	3	2.67	5	3.0	1	2

Elements which mean intern scores were higher than supervising administrators: 1,3,5,6,7,8,9,10
Elements which mean intern scores were lower than supervising administrators: 2,4
Elements which mean intern scores were higher than university sponsors: 1,2,3,5,6,8,9
Elements which mean intern scores were lower than university sponsors: 4,7,10

The interns placed higher value on more of the elements than either the administrators or sponsors. The administrators viewed keeping the log and relationship with the sponsor of greater value to the intern than the intern professed them to be. Sponsors, on the other hand, saw relationship with the sponsor, orientation of the intern, and appropriateness of the assignment as of slightly greater value than the interns professed them to be. It is interesting to note that sponsors saw relationship with the administrators of less value than either the interns or the administrators, while the administrators perceived intern relationship with sponsors to be of high value.

Interns were asked to identify, in response to an open ended question, their most significant area(s) of professional growth. Three or more interns indicated these improved competencies:

- -improved skills in staff relationships
- -awareness of the complexity of public school administration
- -improved human relations abilities
- -gained realistic understanding of the politics of education
- -learned how to lead.

Other representative declarations of improvement were:

- -practical knowledge of how to behave when the chips are down
- -understanding of the place of research in schools
- -solidified my own philosophy of education
- -learned importance of solid administrative organization
- -learned how to generate data for the decision making process
- -communication skills
- -matured to a point where I act rather than react
- -great improvement in understanding school finance
- -improved ability to analyze problems and people
- -learned how to keep cool, act prudently, read, and keep up.

Interns also indicated competencies still needing further development at the end of the internship. Most frequently mentioned were: precision and accuracy in communication, knowledge of curriculum development and finance, patience in dealing with people, and improvement of instructional leadership techniques.

Sponsor Visitations and Face to Face Interaction

The thirteen interns reported a total of 641 intern--administrator conferences during the year, with a range from three to 200, and a mean of 49.3. They reported a total of 64 university sponsor visits during the year, ranging from 0 to 8, and a mean of 4.91 visits. Eleven sponsors reported 60 visits ranging from 0-8, and a mean of 4.61.

The thirteen interns reported a total of 75 administrator-sponsor conferences during the year, ranging from 0 to 15 with a mean of 5.8; administrators reported a total of 53, ranging from 0 to 8, mean 4.81; sponsors reported a total of 87, ranging from 0 to 40, mean 7.90. Obvious discrepancies in the reporting of conferences were to be expected because the reporting was based upon recollection and no emphasis had been placed upon the need to record the number of conferences. The data, however, do help us to conclude

that face to face communication and interaction did take place and that the intern-administrator-sponsor interaction triangle was a reality. Knowledge of frequent interaction in the triangle helps to explain the relatively high agreement on the formal evaluation responses among the role incumbents.

Appraisal Of The Internship Seminars

Intern Seminars were held in Madison, Eau Claire, Pulaski, Kenosha, Menomonee, Rockford, Illinois and Milwaukee on complementary and related themes: planning, student involvement, vocational technical programs, small community problems, program evaluation, metropolitan administration, student activities, and institutional planning and research.

At an all day planning seminar held in Madison on September 14, 1971, seminars for 1971-72 were planned to be held in Appleton, Fond du Lac, Hartland, Madison, Portage, and Pulaski on a variety of themes: vocational technical adult education programs, plant and budget planning processes, administrative organization, decision making process at the University of Wisconsin, intermediate districts, career development, interpersonal relationships and local conflict, and evaluation and appraisal.

Eight seminars were organized and held during the 1970-71 school year with an intern serving as the coordinator. The last seven seminars were planned at an all day planning seminar held in Madison in September, 1970. Administrators and sponsors were encouraged to attend all seminars. Table II contains a summary of attendance at the seminars.

TABLE II

ATTENDANCE SUMMARY AT THE EIGHT INTERNSHIP SEMINARS DURING 1970-71

	Interns (n-13)	Supervising Administrators (n-13)	University Sponsors (n-13)
Total Seminars Attended	94	50	67
Range of Attendance By Individuals	6-8	2-6	0-8
Mean Number of Seminars Attended By Individuals	7.23	3.84	5.15
Attendance Percentage	90.30	48.07	64.42
Mean Attendance At Each Seminar	11.75	6.25	8.37

The objectives of the seminars, themes of each, sites, dates, and coordinators were established at the planning seminar. It is unreasonable to expect that busy administrators and sponsors will be able to attend all day long seminars; nonetheless, it is an objective of the program to secure 100% attendance at each seminar by the interns, administrators, and sponsors. Nine of the interns, seven of the administrators, and six of the sponsors, at the end of the year, indicated that administrators and sponsors should attend all seminars.

The role incumbents, as part of the evaluation process, were asked to evaluate each of the seminars on a three point scale from high (3) to low (1) and to rank order all eight seminars in terms of their value to the interns. Table III presents a summary of that appraisal by the interns.

TABLE III

EVALUATION OF THE EIGHT 1970-71 INTERN SEMINARS BY THE INTERNS (n-13)

	Mean Score
Planning Seminar Conference (Madison) September	2.5
Student Involvement Seminar (Madison) October	2.8
Vocational-Technical Programs (Eau Claire) November	2.4
Small Community Schools (Pulaski) January	2.4
North Central Association (Rockford) February	2.1
Metropolitan School Administration (Milwaukee) March	2.7
Institutional Planning and Evaluation (Stout) April	2.9
Finance, Activities, Evaluation (Kenosha) May	1.7

Due to the fact that only one sponsor and no administrator attended all of the seminars, their responses were too few to justify comparisons. It can be interpreted from the data in Table III that the interns considered most of the seminars to be of high value to them. Each of the last seven seminars was planned and organized by the intern designated at the planning session as seminar coordinator. The intern coordinator consulted with the administrator, sponsor and the program coordinator as he planned the seminars for which he was responsible.

The respondents were asked to make recommendations concerning seminars in the future. Most frequently recorded recommendations for improvement were:

- -allow more time at each seminar for intern interaction
- -reduce the amount of ground covered at each seminar to allow for greater depth
- -attempt to get administrators and sponsors to attend all seminars
- -admit other school personnel to the seminars
- -evaluate the seminars regularly (after each one)
- -don't let the seminars become "show and tell" sessions

Other single suggestions included more focus on leadership training, hold at least one two day seminar for a real in-depth study, have no fewer seminars than one a month, more work on "futures," more emphasis on group process, more role playing sessions.

It is fair to conclude that the seminars can be excellent learning experiences. They should be planned to allow for interaction time. They can add depth and dignity to the total program.

Suggestions For Program Improvement

Interns, administrators, and sponsors were invited to make program improvement suggestions. These are representative of the recommendations:

- -reexamine the purpose of keeping the log
- -increase the amount of interaction between the interns, administrators, and sponsors
- -be sure that job expectations of the intern are clear before he begins work
- -attempt to get better communication between the university and the communities
- -give the intern more direct criticism of his behavior on the job
- -more and regular visits by the sponsors
- -the university should exert more direct control over the entire program
- -distribute regularly on going research reports to the interns
- -give more help to the administrators on how to supervise and lead the interns
- -don't allow interns to become just cheap labor.

Thus it may be seen that, while the internship has come of age and is a viable and significant part of the administrator preparation program, there is great opportunity for improvement and refinement. Those involved in the administration of the program are dedicated to improving it.

Recapitulation and A Final Word

There is mounting evidence that the marriage of theory and practice in the educational enterprise need no longer be labelled a myth. It can become a reality. If it is to become a reality, both theoreticians and practitioners will have to make modifications in their attitudes toward one another and in their perceptions of the reality of the complementarity of their roles. The internship program then, is one point of contact between the two worlds where school men, professors, and students in preparation for administrative positions can find a common meeting ground, and where the teaming of talents in the

local educational institution and the university can result in the improved pre-service and in-service development of educational leaders.

The potentiality of improving the total educational enterprise through this and other means of team work and collaboration is great. The potential partners must work at it.

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